TV Today

By Ron Legro

'Eye of the Beholder' takes look at coalition

Tuned to "The Love Boat" on their home TV, a Mississippi couple watch a man and a woman who have met aboard a cruise ship go into a stateroom and hang out a "Do Not Disturb" sign.

Donald Wildmon

The Mississippi viewers agree that the show is entertaining. But is it socially constructive? "That was an unmarried couple," the husband observes. He and his wife decide, after some debate, that the scene is sexually suggestive.

They mark their opinion on a sheet, which also asks them to record any "jiggly" scenes and scenes in which viewers "are left with the opinion that sexual intercourse occurred."

The husband and wife are monitors for the Coalition for Better Television, a group that says it very soon intends to organize a boycott against companies who advertise on what the coalition deems are morally offensive programs.

The couple are seen at work in "Eye of the Beholder," an important PBS documentary at 8 p.m. Saturday. It will be telecast locally on WMVS-TV (Channel 10) and is a special one-hour segment of the "Inside Story" media-review program.

The program shows other monitors decrying TV because of the use of "offensive" words and phrases, including "Oh, God," "heck" and "whore."

Anchored by Hodding Carter, the program roundly analyzes the implications of a boycott and looks closely at the coalition and the "Pray TV" movement in general.

A coalition boycott is not only likely, but it could have a substantial impact, according to the program. For example, the Moral Majority organization is ready to pump $2 million into such an effort and has plans to raise more money.

Why a boycott? The Rev. Donald Wildmon is executive director of the National Federation for Decency and the coalition's boycott organizer. Wildmon is quoted as saying that Christian values are not being represented on national TV.

However, "Eye of the Beholder" points out that about 100 religious programs are syndicated nationally and that half the viewing audience tunes in at one time or another. CBN, a religious network, broadcasts 24 hours a day. EWTN, another religious network, offers "Westbrook Hospital," a Christian-oriented dramatic series.

Some religious programs, such as those of the Rev. Jerry Falwell and evangelist James Robison, go beyond "saving souls" and now actively promote conservative political philosophies.

Wildmon and his followers argue that merely having a choice or turning off objectionable material doesn't end the threat. Opponents, including numerous network executives and producers, see censorship as a possible outcome of a boycott.

"It'll be the bland leading the bland," says producer Richard Levinson. "He (Wildmon) doesn't trust his own people to stop watching" objectionable material.

"Eye of the Beholder" notes that most organizations belonging to the coalition are small and situated in the southwestern US. They identify themselves with New Right politics.

"If you can capture the medium (of TV)," says one producer, "you can accomplish a great deal toward achieving your political and social ends."

In the case of the New Right groups, that means stands against equal rights for women, pornography in any form, gay people and abortion, among other issues.

While giving all sides a fair hearing, "Eye of the Beholder" raises some crucial issues that go beyond simple debate over what should be seen on TV. In some ways, the circumstances seem reminiscent of the 1950s' Red Scare inspired by Wisconsin's Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

After viewing the show, undecided individuals should ask themselves one critical question:

Following a successful boycott, could programs such as "Eye of the Beholder" even get on the air?

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1981

TV Weekend

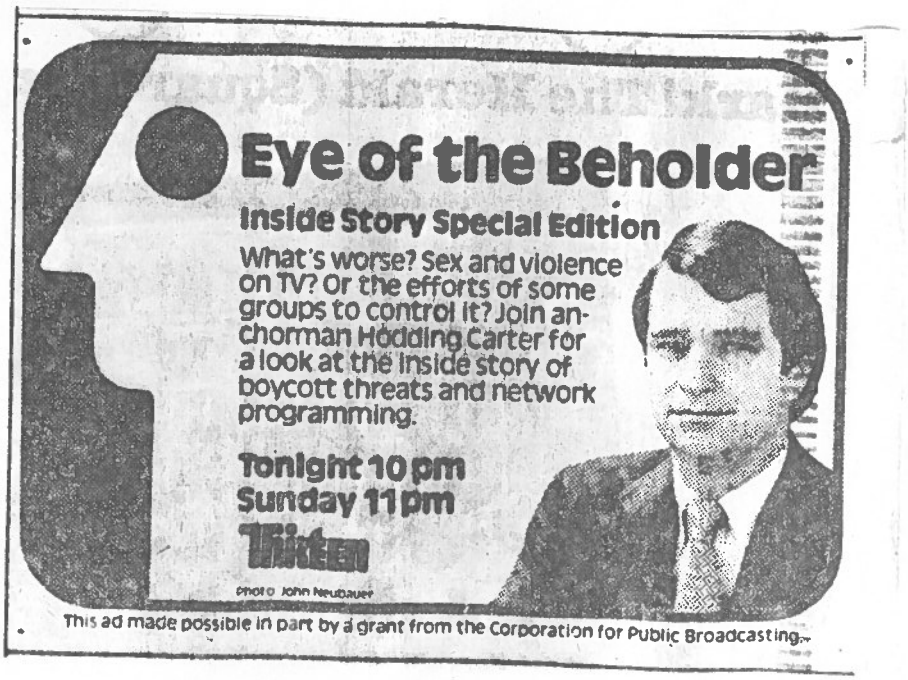
Vietnam Veterans Speak; Christmas Specials Begin

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

Sunday at 11 on WNET-TV, Channel 13, a special edition of the "Inside Story" series, which focuses on broadcasting issues, looks at a number of the new critics of television, motivated mostly by religious beliefs, who contend that programming is what one minister calls "a moral swamp" of four-letter words and suggestive material. Hodding Carter, the program's host, oversees a broad survey of the television scene, beginning in 1961 when Newton Minow of the Federal Communications Commission came up with his handy "vast wasteland" phrase.

Most views in the current confrontation are represented, fairly and adequately, from the Moral Majority's Rev. Jerry Falwell to the heads of networks and production studios. Despite network protestations to the contrary, some producers insist that pressures about certain aspects of content have increased significantly. Elisabeth Coleman, a producer, has recorded certain groups monitoring programs for sexual material or objectionable language. The methods of compilation are startlingly arbitrary.

Mr. Carter concludes that the networks will never be willing or able to satisfy the demands of all the new critics and that a call for a consumer boycott of some advertised products is inevitable. The public can then decide to turn that boycott, like the television set, on or off. This is a valuable review and summary of an extremely sensitive issue.


Eye of the Beholder
Inside Story Special Edition
What's worse? Sex and violence on TV? Or the efforts of some groups to control it? Join anchorman Hodding Carter for a look at the inside story of boycott threats and network programming.
Tonight 10 pm
Sunday 11 pm
Thirteen
photo: John Neubauer
This ad made possible in part by a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

llo, Javier Duran; Dir., Javier Aguirre; Art
M. Pitarch; Photog., Carlos Suarez; Unit
Duran.

SWEDEN

WITH A GIRL
ns/Europa Film Prods.
October)
Bjorn Skifs, Liv Alsterlund, Gosta Ekman,
rom, Stig Ossian Ericson.
Kropenin; Dir., Tomas Lofdhal; Scrnply.,
hl; Photog., Lasse Bjorne.

) THE PLUG OUT
a Film/RI Film Triangelfilm
kholm

on, Kim Anderzon, Magnus Haren-
ricsson, Per Oscarsson, Rolv Wesen-

rom; Dir.-Scrnply., Hans Iveberg;
sson.

ress all additions,
l deletions to the
film production
n Picture Charts,
Reporter, 6715
s Angeles, CA
de the name of
epresentative.

THE
AIGHT

f 20th Cen-
ır perfor-
acknowl-
ames. The
ad "The
ne, are
ing po-
. Not-
nn, as
se, as
Bren-
nald

un
es
n-
V

TV REVIEW

Inside Story – Eye of the Beholder

KCET, Dec. 12, 9-10 p.m.

"Eye of the Beholder," a special edition of "Inside Story," focuses on the Coalition for Better Television: how it functions, reaction it generates from network and advertising representatives and TV producers, and how it's related to the Rev. Jerry Falwell's "Moral Majority" movement and "New Right" politics. An overly long introductory segment comprises clips of TV programs that could be regarded as examples of what the Coalition might find objectionable. However, the montage is top-heavy with clips from programs broadcast in the 1960s, which do not seem relevant to Coalition aims today.

Coalition leader the Rev. Donald Wildmon is interviewed here by "Inside Story's" chief anchorman, Hodding Carter. The special also touches on how Wildmon uses the media to get attention for his views. Carter also interviews Falwell, and individuals involved in monitoring programs for sex, violence and profanity. It's revealed that monitoring procedures tend not to be particularly scientific.

Balance is maintained in the program by Carter interviews with network reps, advertising company executives and TV producers, including E. Duke Vincent, Norman Lear and David Gerber. Also adding dimension to the report is a survey of televangelists. The many perspectives offered convey a somewhat confusing conflict, with unclear ramifications. Network execs deny they will bow to Coalition pressure even if a boycott of advertisers goes into effect. Producers assert Coalition pressure has already had an impact on the network thought, though, and it has definitely already influenced advertiser strategy. Meanwhile, in Coalition and Falwell camps, divided opinion supports both producers' and network executive assertions. Falwell says he considers this season's network programming as grounds for declaring "victory." But Wildmon contends monitoring indicates little change in objectionable content on network TV, and threatens a boycott. It's apparent from viewing the special that there's a strong possibility the threat of a boycott wields more influence than an actual boycott might.

This edition of "Inside Story" was produced by Joe Russin and Elisabeth Coleman. Senior producer for the Press & the Public Eye Inc. presentation was Irv Drasnin. Ned Schnurman was executive producer.

– Gail Williams

UA Theatre effort in THR contest

Details of efforts of the m
Little Rock and the Unite
Theatre Circuit to arrang
ing child to visit Disney
been submitted in Th
Reporter Marketing C
competition.

Thomas Copping
Arkansas UA Cir
photos, tearsheet
and KARK-TV
illustrated the
Monica Pelk
got her wish
and Donal

United
how, sta
Fox an
electro
and
raise
to

in
t

PM-TV 12-10

TV WORLD

BY KENNETH R. CLARK

UPI TV REPORTER

NEW YORK (UPI) -- SEX AND VIOLENCE ON THE PRIME TIME TUBE AREN'T THE ONLY CONCERNS OF THE REV. DONALD WILDMON. HE HINTS -- PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE HE FORMED HIS COALITION FOR BETTER TELEVISION -- THAT THERE IS ROOM FOR OTHER MEDIA SINNERS AS WELL IN THE WOODSHED OF HIS MORAL INDIGNATION.

"THE LORD HAS MORE IN MIND HERE THAN TELEVISON," HE TELLS HODDING CARTER IN "EYE OF THE BEHOLDER," THE NEXT INSTALLMENT OF PBS'S INCISIVE "INSIDE STORY," TO BE AIRED FRIDAY AT 10 P.M., EST, SUNDAY AT 11 P.M., AND UNDER VARIOUS LOCAL LISTINGS, NATIONWIDE.

WILDMON'S FOES WILL BE QUICK TO SHOUT, "I TOLD YOU SO." THEY HAVE CHARGED ALL ALONG THAT IF HIS LONG-THREATENED BOYCOTT OF THOSE WHO SPONSOR NETWORK "JIGGLE SHOWS" IS A SUCCESS, MOVIES, MAGAZINES -- EVEN THE NEWS -- WILL BE THE NEXT TO FEEL THE CENSOR'S WRATH.

BUT HIS FOES WILL NOT ESCAPE THE DISTINCT FEELING THAT THE SOFT-SPOKEN MINISTER FROM TUPELO, MISS., IS NOT BLUFFING THIS TIME.

WILDMON ANNOUNCED, THEN CALLED OFF, ONE BOYCOTT LAST SPRING. HIS MENTOR, JERRY FALWELL OF THE MORAL MAJORITY, ALREADY IS PROCLAIMING VICTORY AND PREDICTING NO BOYCOTT WILL BE NECESSARY.

NOT WILDMON.

"IN FACT," HE TELLS CARTER, "I GET THE OPINION THAT THE NETWORKS MIGHT REALLY WANT A BOYCOTT, AND THAT IT WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL, AND THEN WE'LL BE OUT OF BUSINESS."

THE NETWORKS MAY FERVENTLY HOPE FOR JUST THAT, BUT THEY DO NOT COME OFF IN "EYE OF THE BEHOLDER" LOOKING, AS THEY WOULD LIKE TO LOOK, LIKE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR RIDING IN DEFENSE OF LIBERTY.

CARTER INTERVIEWS SEVERAL NETWORK EXECUTIVES, ALL OF WHOM ARE LOFTY IN THEIR SCORN FOR WILDMON'S THREAT. TELEVISION SCREENWRITERS, HOWEVER, DO NOT BUY THE BLUSTER. THEY TELL CARTER THAT FOR ALL THE TOUGH TALK, THE NETWORKS PRIVATELY HAVE BEEN LEANING ON THEM TO CLEAN UP THE ACT EVER SINCE WILDMON CAME ON THE SCENE.

AS WRITER DAVID GERBER PUTS IT, "THEY'RE SPEAKING LOUDLY, BUT WITH A SOFT STICK."

"EYE OF THE BEHOLDER" PROBABLY IS THE MOST EXHAUSTIVE TELEVISION EXAMINATION DONE TO DATE OF THE VIDEO HOLY WAR OF THE '80S.

IT DISSECTS WHAT WILDMON CONSIDERS OFFENSIVE IN PRIME TIME AND CONTRASTS IT SHARPLY WITH THE BANAL PAP THAT RULED THE TUBE DURING NEWTON MINNOW'S "GREAT WASTELAND" OF THE '50S.

IT DEPICTS THE NETWORKS AS BOTTOM-LINE MACHINES, INSENSITIVE TO ANY INDUCEMENT TOWARD QUALITY BEYOND PROFIT MARGINS, BUT IT BALANCES THE SCALES WITH A PENETRATING LOOK AT THE PATENTLY STACKED DECK FROM WHICH WILDMON'S MONITORING FAMILIES ARE EXPECTED TO DEAL "OBJECTIVE" ANALYSES OF PROGRAMS.

FALWELL IS THERE, LIKE GENGHIS KHAN RALLYING HIS GOLDEN HORDE IN SUPPORT OF WILDMON'S BOYCOTT -- $2 MILLION, 4.5 MILLION FAMILIES, 80,000 PASTORS AND "FULL PAGE ADS LISTING PUBLIC ENEMY NO. 1."

"WITHIN 30 DAYS," HE SAYS, "THE DUST WOULD BE FLYING."

A GRAY-HAIRED LADY ALLY OF WILDMON EXPLAINS THE ZEAL THAT DRIVES HER WITH A LINE THAT MIGHT COME STRAIGHT OUT OF "THE SAYINGS OF CHAIRMAN MAO."

"I THINK THERE IS SUCH A THING AS PUBLIC MORALITY," SHE SAYS. "I THINK THERE REACHES A POINT THAT THE PUBLIC INTEREST -- THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE -- SUPERCEDES EACH PERSON'S WISHES."

WILDMON -- WHO FOR ALL HIS WILD RIDE ON THE STEED OF HYPE SO EAGERLY PROVIDED FOR HIM BY THE NEWS MEDIA DOES NOT FOAM AT THE MOUTH -- WAS NERVOUS ABOUT HIS STATEMENT THAT SOMETHING OTHER THAN TELEVISION ULTIMATELY MIGHT FIND ITS WAY TO HIS BOYCOTT LIST.

"THIS IS A POINT WHERE THE NETWORKS CAN POP ME REAL GOOD," HE SAYS. "I HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL OF THE STATEMENTS I MAKE IN PUBLIC BECAUSE THEY'LL ALL COME BACK TO HAUNT ME."

HIS COMMENT THAT "THE LORD HAS MORE IN MIND HERE THAN TELEVISION" PROBABLY WILL, BUT NO MORE SO THAN HE, HIMSELF, HAS HAUNTED THE NETWORKS.

UNTIL JANUARY OR FEBRUARY, WHEN THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN IN THE MARKETPLACE, "INSIDE STORY" MAKES IT A STANDOFF.

UPI 12-10-81 05:01 AES

A051

R W

Special examining moral majority censors deserves attention

ED BARK

As a spokesman for the secretary of state during the Iran crisis, Hodding Carter III established himself as a first-rate flak.

Now he's a journalist of the first rank, too. *Eye of the Beholder*, a special 1-hour edition of Carter's *Inside Story* series, is a brilliant, fair-minded look at the decency groups that want to clean up prime time network television. The program airs at 10 p.m. Thursday on Channel 13. I'll give it five stars, bells, asterisks or whatever else it takes to convince viewers that this show shouldn't be missed.

Carter, whose roots are in newspaper journalism, has interviewed decency group leaders, network executives, Hollywood producers, advertisers, commentators and pollsters in an effort to put this still volatile issue in perspective. Featured players include James Robison, the outspoken Hurst evangelist; Lottie Beth Hobbs, head of the Fort Worth-based Pro Family Forum; and several area "monitors," who recently helped complete a 3-month survey of TV programs conducted by the Rev. Donald Wildmon's Coalition For Better Television. The results will be the basis for what Rev. Wildmon says will be a nationwide boycott next month of advertisers sponsoring "immoral" programs.

IN *BEHOLDER'S* most fascinating, revealing segment, Bob and Linda Archer of Hurst are shown monitoring an episode of ABC's *Love Boat*. During an on-camera training session with Rev. Wildmon, the Archers were told to look for "jiggly scenes" and other instances of objectionable sexual content. Rev. Wildmon says a woman in a bathing suit on a beach doesn't necessarily fall into his jiggly category. But things do get jiggly if a camera "zooms in" on her breasts or buttocks, Rev. Wildmon instructs. The jiggly section of the monitoring forms should be checked every time there is "undue emphasis on the human anatomy," he explains.

What follows is some honest to goodness soul-searching in the Archers' living room. Is it jiggly when a woman in a low-cut evening dress ends up in the *Love Boat* pool? Yes, the Archers conclude. How about when guest star Robert Walden takes the woman into his cabin and posts a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door? The Archers differ over whether the scene is sexually suggestive.

THE IMPRESSION made is of two well-meaning people who have gut feelings that something is wrong with the overall content of network television. Carter doesn't hold the Archers up to ridicule, but the segment with them does point out some problems with Rev. Wildmon's largely unscientific monitoring process.

Before interviewing Rev. Wildmon and the Moral Majority's Rev. Jerry Falwell at length, Carter points out that criticism of network television has been the rule rather than the exception throughout the medium's history. Former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton Minnow called TV a "vast wasteland" 20 years ago, Carter recalls. A decade later, former FCC commissioner Nicholas Johnson described network television executives as a "vicious, evil influence" on society. Today, the fare on prime time TV is termed a "moral swamp" rather than a vast wasteland, Carter says. In the succinct words of Rev. Falwell, "We're talking about dirt."

Countering the argument that viewers simply can turn off what they don't like, Rev. Falwell tellingly replies, "Let the networks do the turning on the other end before they dump the garbage in your living room."

FROM THE perspective of some Hollywood producers, Rev. Wildmon and Rev. Falwell consistently say they know what they don't like before having seen it.

"They've attacked a number of shows just from what they have read about them long before they were produced," contends Norman Lear, the preeminent producer, who has formed People for the American Way as a counter to the decency groups.

Robert Mullholland, president of NBC, says his network is ready for a boycott that he is certain will fail. But Rev. Wildmon and Rev. Falwell are split over the idea of compiling a hit list of advertisers. The pair joined forces last February when Rev. Wildmon's National Federal for Decency teamed with the Moral Majority to form the National Coalition For Better Television. When the alliance was announced, network executives suddenly paid attention to the decency groups, denouncing them repeatedly at public forums.

While they were perceiving the enemy, Rev. Wildmon and Rev. Falwell became their own worst enemies. Rev. Wildmon adamantly wants a boycott; Rev. Falwell does not.

Contending that the current TV season has "turned around radically" and become "cleaner," Rev. Falwell tells Carter that an advertiser boycott is very unlikely.

Rev. Wildmon says TV is as immoral as ever, based on the preliminary results of the CBTV's monitoring. Asked if a boycott is the next step, Rev. Wildmon replies, "No question about that. Only question is when."

I have interviewed Rev. Wildmon, seen him debate a network executive and written numerous, generally unfavorable columns about his clean-up campaign. But I have a far better feel for the man and his supporters after watching *Beholder*. It is an excellent, unbiased dissection of a very ticklish topic. Carter deserves applause from both sides and an Emmy for his outstanding contribution to television journalism.

Television

HOUSTON CHRONICLE December 15, 1981

Ann Hodges
TV-radio editor

New edition of 'Inside Story' improved

Inside Story, that self-appointed TV watchdog of the media, was not my pick of the litter last season. But from an insider's view, the latest special edition of *Inside Story* seemed to signal that things are looking up.

Over last weekend, that PBS series returned to turn its attention to Round 2 in what looms as a continuing battle to force TV to clean up its act, and it was by all odds the most comprehensive television view yet of what's happening and who's behind the whole thing.

Eye of the Beholder was the title, and an apt one, too. How viewers see TV's manners and morals depends largely on who's doing the looking.

Host-reporter **Hodding Carter** tried hard to include every vantage point in this survey, and there was, therefore, no consensus. The clean-up crusaders are still demanding changes, while the networks insist they pooh-pooh both the complaints and the complainers.

The key to what's really happening probably rests with the "creative" people who make the programs. According to their yardstick of groundrules handed down from network upper echelons, the pressure groups definitely have TV running scared. "They (the networks) are speaking loudly, but with a soft stick," says producer **David Gerber**.

Rev. Donald Wildmon of the Coalition for Better Television spoke louder than most anybody on this fascinating hour of inside TV, and perhaps the most significant thing he said was his admission that cleaning up television may be just for openers.

"The Lord has more in mind here than television," Wildmon leveled with reporter Carter. And that remark must have set the network executives in the audience to cheering. They've been arguing all along that if television caves in to coalition demands, newspapers, magazines and goodness knows what will become the next targets for pressure.

Inside Story provided a unique opportunity for the viewers to hear Wildmon in person, and watch his TV monitors at work, counting the incidences of sex and violence on a scale that seemed too weighted to be of any real value.

Wildmon warned that the sponsor boycott he called off last fall is "almost a sure thing" for next month. "In fact," he said, "I get the opinion that the networks might really want a boycott, because they feel it will not be successful and then we'll be out of business."

Wildmon's most potent ally and member of his Coalition is the Moral Majority. And *Inside Story* visited that group's headquarters, too, for an interview with the **Rev. Jerry Falwell**. Surprisingly, Falwell doesn't agree that a boycott is inevitable. He thinks there probably will not be one. But if there were, it would be an all-out assault on offending advertisers, and Falwell's Moral Majority would provide the underwriting and manpower.

In Falwell's figures, his group could muster "$2 million, 4.5 million families, 80,000 pastors, and full-page ads in major newspapers across the country listing Public Enemy No. 1."

Thanks to *Inside Story*, the TV viewers have at least met the generals from both camps which claim to represent their interests — lest, indeed, those battle lines be drawn in 1982.